

The Claims

What is claimed is:

1. A packaged confectionery combination comprising a closed flexible
5 package member surrounding a confectionery product comprising a plurality of
individual confectionery pieces, each having a glossy appearance and being packed in
a matrix configuration within the package member, wherein the matrix configuration
extends in at least two directions within the package member so as to form at least one
layer of at least two rows in each direction, with each row including a series of
10 individual confectionery pieces, and wherein the package member is tight enough
around the confectionery pieces so as to maintain the integrity and shape of the matrix
configuration when the package member is closed in order to maintain the glossy
appearance and to avoid scuffing of the pieces prior to opening the package member,
but wherein the pieces move out of the matrix configuration when the package
15 member is opened to facilitate nibbling of individual pieces from the package
member.

2. The packaged confectionery combination according to claim 1, wherein
the package member is a flow wrap package.

20 3. The packaged confectionery combination according to claim 1, wherein
the confectionery pieces are arranged so as to provide a clearance between the
confectionery pieces effective to enable the confectionery pieces to collapse in the
package member when the package member is opened.

25 4. The packaged confectionery combination according to claim 3, wherein
the confectionery pieces each have a rectangular shape with sides that include
touching portions and adjacent distant portions for forming the clearance.

30 5. The packaged confectionery combination according to claim 1, wherein
the confectionery pieces are housed in the flow wrap package freely and without an
additional support member.

6. The packaged confectionery combination according to claim 1, wherein the flow wrap package member comprises two opposite web portions wrapping on each main side of the matrix configuration to form a sleeve that is sealed along a longitudinal seam and delimited at both ends by two transverse seams .

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7. The packaged confectionery combination according to claim 6, wherein the package member is constituted by a sleeve forming two rectangular opposite web portions folded along one edge and having three other edges forming sealing seams.

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8. The packaged confectionery combination according to claim 7, wherein the sleeve forms a substantially flattened tubular web with a longitudinal seam extending approximately centrally along one side of the sleeve and closed on both transverse edges by transverse end seams.

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9. The packaged confectionery combination according to claim 6, wherein the flow wrap package member comprises web portions that are maintained distant from each other, at rest, a distance (d_0) that is lower than twice the overall thickness (h_0) of the layer(s) of confectionery pieces in the matrix configuration.

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10. The packaged confectionery combination according to claim 1, wherein the package member comprises an opening portion with an opening means adapted to open the opening portion of the package member whereby opening of the opening means releases tension of the package member around the confectionery pieces to enable the confectionery pieces to move out of the matrix configuration and to become disordered in the package member.

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11. The packaged confectionery combination according to claim 10, wherein the opening means is arranged along one edge of the package member.

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12. The packaged confectionery combination according to claim 10, wherein the opening means is arranged to open longitudinally.

13. The packaged confectionery combination according to claim 10, wherein the opening means comprises a tear cut means, a zipper-type opening, a tear tape, perforation, laser perforation or combination(s) thereof.

5 14. The packaged confectionery combination according to claim 1, wherein the confectionery pieces have angular surfaces.

10 15. The packaged confectionery combination according to claim 14, wherein the confectionery pieces form, when arranged in abutting relationship in the matrix configuration, several rows in a substantially parallelepipedal shape.

15 16. The packaged confectionery combination according to claim 1, wherein at least some of the confectionery pieces are provided in the package member in the form of a scored block with the pieces separated by grooves and are broken off the block along the grooves so as to move out of the matrix configuration when the package member is opened.

20 17. The packaged confectionery combination according to claim 1, wherein the confectionery pieces are distributed as individual separate pieces and subsequently wrapped together in the matrix configuration.

18. The packaged confectionery combination according to claim 1, wherein the at least two rows are arranged in parallel in the package member.

25 19. The packaged confectionery combination according to claim 1, wherein the confectionery product comprises two superimposed layers of separate confectionery pieces of the same or different confectionery material, thus extending the matrix configuration to a third dimension (D_3).

30 20. The packaged confectionery combination according to claim 1, wherein the confectionery pieces have a chocolate outer surface.

21. A method for providing a confectionery product in the form of confectionery pieces in a package member that reduces scuffing of the pieces and promotes nibbling of the confectionery pieces, which method comprises:

5 providing a plurality of individual confectionery pieces, each having a glossy appearance and being present in a matrix configuration that extends in at least two directions within the package member so as to form at least one layer of at least two rows in each direction, with each row including a series of individual confectionery pieces, and

10 flow wrapping the matrix configuration of confectionery pieces to form a package member that is adapted in tension and size to be sufficiently tight around the pieces to retain the matrix configuration in order to maintain the around the confectionery pieces to retain the matrix configuration in order to maintain the glossy appearance of and avoid scuffing of the pieces when the package member is closed, wherein the tension of the package member is released upon opening of the 15 package member so that the pieces move out of the matrix configuration to facilitate nibbling of individual pieces from the package member.

22. The method according to claim 21 which further comprises providing at least some of the pieces as a scored block of confectionery, and then breaking up the 20 block after wrapping it in the package member to separate the pieces.

23. The method according to claim 22, wherein the wrapping is carried out horizontally in an horizontal wrap device.

25 24. The method according to claim 22, wherein the plurality of confectionery pieces is wrapped as a sufficiently tight assembly of pieces capable of retaining its shape assembly of separate abutting pieces after breaking.

30 25. A method for producing a combination consisting of a flow wrap package member and a confectionery product wrapped within the package member wherein the confectionery product is wrapped horizontally using an horizontal flow wrap device (8) and wherein the confectionery product is wrapped while forming a sleeve member having at least one longitudinal seam and wherein, the confectionery product forms, after wrapping, an arrangement of at least one layer (10, 10a, 10b) of a

plurality of separate confectionery pieces of more than one row, with each row comprising at least two confectionery pieces and wherein the flow wrap is capable of maintaining the arrangement in place until first opening of the flow wrap.

5 26. The method according to claim 25, wherein the arrangement of confectionery pieces is retained in place, at least partly by the control of the width and tension of the sleeve member as determined by the sealing of the longitudinal seam.

10 27. The method according to claim 25, wherein the arrangement of confectionery pieces is wrapped while leaving a clearance between the confectionery pieces effective for the confectionery to collapse upon opening of the package member and to occupy a volume less than the total available volume of the opened package.